D I N A N.

DINAN.

A Romance.

"A book's a book, although there's nothing in't."

LONDON,
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1821.

DINAN.

A ROMANCE.

Ennui, or, as our mothers called thee, Spleen!
To thee we owe full many a rare device.
Harold the Dauntless.

TO the wise and to the cynical, to over-hanging brows charged with observation and sallow study-tinctured visages, the following pages are not addressed. If such an one should chance to open them, I reed him by all means to close the volume, return to his Lexicon and his Aristotle, or go on impaling glow-worms and ticketing

bits of granite, or stroll away to the comfortable dullness of his own Common-Room. I address myself to less exalted spirits, to such as labour under evils, real or imaginary, of minor importance, who may be suffering (as I now am) the dull anguish of a head-ache, or the still more insupportable though less painful lassitude of ennui. If for a short time I should succeed in interrupting the mental perception of their distress, (for I do not consider even the last-mentioned calamity as one of no importance,) I shall congratulate myself on my services to my fellow-creatures. If I could, I would prove my usefulness by inventing superior coffee-mills, by devising unthought-of patterns or unheard-of bell-ropes. As this I cannot do, I do all I can to increase the satisfaction of life. It is with sympathy that I say this, suffering as I do under a temporary malady, and having exhausted all the readable and unreadable Novels in our Circu-

lating Library, so that I am left to my own resources, to my easy chair, and a view over the rich plain of S——. It is within the compass of the view before me that I propose to represent the actions of my story: and when I premise that the principal facts are matter of history, the reader will readily supply (what I next should say)—that the superstructure is, in the main, matter of invention. I aim not at a regular Romance, I seek only to amuse myself and others, and shall be content if I am dismissed with a smile by my readers in general, and overlooked with a sneer by critics in particular—

> Nor does the volume ask for more renown
> Than Ennui's yawning smile, what time she
> drops it down.

Reader! I am about to transport thee into the regions of fiction: I seek not to throw a flimsy veil of truth over my

story. I care not whether you believe one word that I say: only repose yourself on your sofa or library chair, (and may it be easy as mine,) and that chair shall be the magic car on which I mean to withdraw you awhile from this work-day world, its troubles, its pleasures, its anxieties, and amusements. Observe, however, that I am about to bring forward other characters than the puny heroes of modern days; dandies, namely, connoisseurs, poetic lords, or philosophizing ladies. Be not alarmed then, O ye fashionables of either sex! if a figure should cross the stage of more gigantic proportions; nor deem that I am drawing imaginary characters, not to be found in nature, if I please myself in picturing forth chivalrous courage and chaste affection. Suffer me to relapse into the sweet error of my childhood, and revive those hues of the dawning which then captivated my fancy, and which have never been

worthily replaced by the broad light of open day. Leaving metaphor, however, I begin.

CHAP. II.

IN the reign of one of the most warlike of our English kings, (and the reader will at once pronounce that it must have been in the time of the Plantagenets,) yes, when a Plantagenet ruled the land, there were few of the Barons of the West that equalled in power Syr Fulke de Dinan. To him had descended the vast inheritance of the Montgomeries; the founder of which family, Roger de Montgomerie, had received from his uncle the Conqueror a more extensive grant than any of his other barons. In his Castle of Dinan, accordingly, Fulke exacted and received the homage of inferior lords, who severally possessed domains, that in modern days would have given titles to dozens, nay, scores of earls and

viscounts. But I am not purposed to describe the feodal magnificence of Fulke de Dinan, the number of his retainers, and the names of his castles and their height, or the various quarterings of his armorial coat, (lest I should inadvertently give a clue to the antiquaries for discovering the reign in which I choose to fix my story, so soon as they shall have decided, whether arms were first borne in the Croisades or in the war of Thebes :)—no, I am bent upon describing things far less important in the estimation of a genuine Romancer, namely, what happened to the said Fulke de Dinan himself. Still, as I cannot suppose the reader quite comfortable in his chair till he has some small insight into the particulars aforesaid, I shall briefly sketch his residence.

There is a certain little stream, a tributary of the majestic Severn, which I should not call a *little* stream, but when mentioned in connexion with its mightier com-

peer: on the banks of this rose the towers of Dinan[b].

From the woods which covered the tops of all the neighbouring eminences; from the dark forests that here and there still kept their ground; from the meadows through which the river wound—rapid, clear, and restless; from all these the towers of Dinan were a conspicuous object: seated on their rocky height, lording it over all the surrounding territory. The Saxon peasant sighed internally as he saw the wind unroll to the sun the broad banner of Fulke de Dinan, from the look-out turret of his highest tower, while here and there armour was flashing along the battlements. The Norman Knight, as he rode over the waste of Mochtree, recovered heart at the sight of the towers of Dinan. Caer-Dugol[c] had ceased to be the terror of the neighbouring Welshmen, and from Dinan issued the troops that wasted

[b] Ludlow. [c] Shrewsbury.

so often the vales of Radnor. Its walls were not then, as now, gray with age and half-fallen, but fresh from the quarry, perfect, and from their commanding situation, on the brink of a precipice, and prodigious height, as well as their massive structure, deemed impregnable, in the times in which we choose to place our story. But Dinan was nothing but a fortress; the abode only of soldiers and knights, and scarcely even the temporary refuge of strolling priests, mendicants, and pardoners. The disposition of Fulke itself was not such as to encourage the resort of pacific strangers, who came thither to seek, rather than to afford, military aid. Imagine to yourself a noble of the old Norman sort; of somewhat loftier stature, I mean, as well as more exalted lineage, than a new-made peer of the nineteenth century, in the prime of life, manifesting in his carriage the consciousness of his military fame, his swart brows shading an eye of pride, and his cheek seamed with

a wound he had received, I grieve to say it, from the hand of his warlike Sovereign, (for Fulke had been a rebel in his day,) and his close buff coat exhibiting the matchless strength of his proportions. Such in exterior was the baron of Dinan. His hair, (I speak for the information of the ladies,) where it had not been thinned by the ceaseless oppression of the helmet, curled into short strong rings of the blackest dye, and like his face was scorched by the sun. This impetuous chief, who had fought in more battles than he numbered years, was now sorely distraught by a malady for which that simple age had not yet found a name, but which succeeding generations have agreed in denominating Ennui. He had overthrown but a fortnight before the irregular troops of Rhys-ap-Hoel, and wasted the borders of Wales for many a league. Not long before he had had the satisfaction of burning to the ground the castle of a refractory baron, Syr Gilbert le Corbeau, or

Corbet, and had sent back a flat denial to the royal demand of subsidy, without experiencing the usual and looked-for consequences of such a refusal—a siege or a battle. To add to his other causes of self-complacency, he at that very time kept chained in the strongest and deepest dungeon of his castle his old antagonist, Mortimer of Wigmore, whom he had carried away one winter night, after having scaled his castle, and slain or captured all his garrison. With all these subjects of pleasing reflection, Syr Fulke arose from his bed, dissatisfied, restless, and impatient: it was not the season for hunting, nor for hawking; fishing the warlike baron justly contemned; and unhappily in those days the nobility had not discovered the ready way of dissipating their territories and their time on the race-course. He strode in a moody fit to the battlements, from which he surveyed the subject-country; subject in more senses than one. Every hill green

with interminable woodland; every winding valley with its thatched hamlet and humble spire, peeping through the trees; with the miserable inhabitants thereof, not less than the herds they tended and the fields they attempted to till, all were belonging to Dinan alone. The very tenants of the stream that reflected his castle wall, and every deer that still continued to range the woods of Mochtree, were considered the property of the feodal baron. Not an acre of all he saw, from the rich meadows beneath, to the mountains that stretched along the horizon, softened by the distance, not an acre of all this extensive view belonged to other than Fulke de Dinan. Syr Fulke beheld all this, and sighed.

CHAP. III.

LONG did he continue to lean over the battlements, and watch, for lack of something else, a party of his retainers, who were descending the opposite hill, laden with burdens of wood from the forest, to supply the castle with winter fuel, when his eye was suddenly arrested by the flash of armour from a little wood by the riverside, in the wide lawn that lay before the castle. Presently he saw a figure advance from the covert of the wood, and warily take a view of the fortalice. There was something in the action, and still more in the manner, that caught the attention of Dinan. He unconsciously laid his hand on his sword, an action familiar to him. After a short pause, the strange figure dis-

appeared again in the thicket. Syr Fulke still continued to gaze on the vacant scene: he was disturbed, but his melancholy was gone. He forebore to call the attention of the negligent centinel on the watch turret, which was, in fact, engrossed by a party at ball in the castle-court, and internally denouncing vengeance against him, he descended the winding stair through all its suspicious intricacies, and without any other attendant than a blood-hound, his inseparable companion, (dignified by the appellation, among the peasantry, of Sathan's ban-dog, a designation that reflected as much, to say the least, on the master as on the hound,) he left the castle by a postern door, and sought the little wood, urged on by an impetuosity, for which (had he attempted it) we would probably not have been able to account, but which in fact was nothing more than the effect of indolence, stimulated and roused by curiosity.

When he reached the wood, he anxiously

examined every brake and dingle, "shagged with horrid thorn," but nothing living did he see nor hear, save the blackbird, that flew screaming from her bush, and the little stoat, whose velvet-footed canter along the pathway was converted into a terrified run at the sight of the gigantic Dinan, and his scarcely less formidable attendant. But Dent-de-Sang, such was the blood-hound's name, never thought of such unworthy prey, but instinctively perceiving that his lord was on the search for an enemy, pricked up his huge ears, and ranged through the thicket. After having vainly examined it on every side, Dinan paused to listen: he listened long, but nothing heard, save the murmuring of the stream beside him, and the distant shouts of his retainers, who were engaged in their play. He advanced into the open country still he could not discern the trace of any one. Meanwhile he himself was observed by the centinel on the turret, who now

(most unluckily) happened to be thinking of his duty. First, a challenge was heard in a haughty voice, which the towers and the opposing rocks repeated again and again. The high-born Baron heard not the first challenge, and attended not to the second. It was not the custom of the centinels of Castle-Dinan to challenge thrice; and the lord of all around might have fallen by a bolt from his own battlements, had not Dent-de-Sang at that moment rushed from the thicket, and for some cause or other opened his shaggy jaws with a fearful baying. Though the centinel had not recognized the figure of his lord, he recollected the accustomed yell of Sathan's ban-dog. He stayed the cross-bow he was in the act of discharging, internally wishing himself at the bottom of the precipice for what he had been about to do. Meanwhile Dinan, unconscious of the danger he had escaped, was occupied with attending to the hound, who had evidently

fallen on the track of some one. He coursed here and there through the thicket, and instead of pursuing any certain direction, repeatedly doubled his steps, till he stopped altogether under a gigantic fragment of rock, washed by the stream, and screened from the castle by the thickest foliage. Here he tore up the earth with his claws, and ever and anon desisting, uttered a doleful howl. "It is not a rat or a rabbit we are seeking, Dent-de-Sang," muttered Dinan; but suddenly the dog sprung forward with the utmost ferocity. Dinan turned his eyes in that direction, and beheld, appearing from behind the rock, a tall figure, his helmet closed, and a coat of mail on his breast. In an instant both swords flew from their scabbards; the Baron deigned not to ask any question of the armed intruder, nor did the other wait for it. At once they struck at each other with all their might; each parried the blow with his sword, for shields they had none. Dinan,

whose rage was beyond bounds, thought at the second blow to cleave his adversary from crest and corslet; but he parried the stroke once more, rushed upon Dinan, and, darting his left arm round him, hurled him with incredible force against the rock on which he stood. In doing so he fell himself upon his foe: but the steel cap of Dinan coming in contact with the rock, he was stunned, and lay motionless under the sword of his adversary. That sword however was not raised to strike; the stranger threw it to the ground, and, snatching up Dinan as easily as a falcon clutches a partridge in her talons, he bore him into the hollow of the rock from which he had emerged. All this was done in an instant. The actions of the strange warrior were such as betokened one practised in all the emergencies of warfare, as well as perfect in the use of his weapons.

But the fallen chief of Dinan, though unsupported by his countless vassals, had still

one faithful follower; the fierce blood-hound darted against the throat of the stranger, and but for his gorget of mail he had not escaped with impunity. Even thus, it was with difficulty he repulsed the hound, and succeeded in bearing Dinan within the hidden cavern. Then, indeed, with the sword of Syr Fulke in his hand, he prepared to strike his pursuer; but the hound, unappalled by the uplifted weapon, bayed furiously as before, and watched a moment, to spring upon him. The stranger forebore to strike, and, closing the mouth of the cave, disappeared from the face of day; and the cleft from which he had issued seemed again to be nothing more than a native hollow in the rock, overhung by drooping briars and a profusion of ivy.

CHAP. IV.

FOR a while we must be content to leave Dinan in the hands of his victorious foe, and return to the castle, from which he parted that inauspicious morn. The watchmen on the wall could not help being surprised at the continued baying of the hound, now changed to a frightful howl; and, after some consultation, agreed to go and investigate the cause. They apprehended some mischance; for in those days of interminable warfare, the foes of a Baron were often to be found within the precincts of his domain. First a few retainers repaired to the spot; but as their lord was not to be found, and Dent-de-Sang refused to quit the spot, soon greater numbers

flocked thither, and in the course of an hour the little wood was full of figures, armed and unarmed, who were traversing it in every direction, and expressing in every possible phrase of wonder their amazement and perplexity.

A stripling at last drew from a briar-bush, which had concealed it, the sword of the stranger, which, as we have said, he had cast aside in grappling with Dinan. All eyes at once were open, and presently all mouths also with exclamations of surprise. They were disappointed evidently at not seeing upon it any goutes of blood: no, the blade was bright, and with scarce a dint upon its edge. It was not Syr Fulke's sword: his was a shorter blade, not so long, nor so heavy, nor with such an outlandish hilt to it, cried one of the crowd, who was in fact the armourer of Castle-Dinan: and all agreed that it was not the Baron's sword. "Then whose was it?" "My master's,"

said one old man with much gravity; "I will wager a groat, that he who owns this blade is the man that has made away with Syr Fulke." And most of those present agreed in the probability of this conjecture.

But inasmuch as after a diligent search no other indications of the fate of their lord were to be found, they agreed to go with the sword, and their story, in search of Geffrey de Dinan, brother of the Baron, "and he will find it out I warrant him." "But what is the hound after in that hollow there?" said a little boy, who had followed the crowd: "Oh, he has got scent of a badger, I suppose," said one: "Nay, nay," said another, "see how he foams at the mouth, and tears his nails off against the rock: the dog is clean gone mad, I fear me; let's try him with the water." They were still more confirmed in this belief, when, as they were proceeding to withdraw, the faithful hound flew at the hindmost, and, seizing him by the juppon, at-

tempted to drag him towards the rock, and was only made to quit his hold by repeated blows. In fact, he was by no means a favourite in the castle, and accordingly the blows he received were laid on with such hearty good-will, that he was forced to decamp for a season. The multitude pursued their way to the castle.

Before the postern door sate on his black charger, (from which he had not descended, having but just arrived,) Geffrey, the Baron's brother, listening to the various conjectures that were broached on every side respecting Fulke's untimely fate. When the sword which had been found was put into his hand, the martial youth, first poising and swaying the blade, pronounced it to be a good weapon, and then proceeded to examine it closely. An old man was standing beside him, whose keen features were bent upon Geffrey during this scrutiny. "I have seen that blade before," said he coldly: "Where!" cried Geffrey, his hawk's

eye turning upon him at once. "I have seen the blade, Baron of Dinan, ere now; it is not to be mistaken, for it is not such an one as John-of-the-anvil here forges every day in the week." This speech, but for the presence of Geffrey, had drawn a more fatal answer from the insulted armourer, than the one with which he contented himself; namely, a menacing twist of his rugged features, and a nod of the head, which promised future retribution. "Baron of Dinan I am not," said Geffrey, with something that seemed but too like a sigh. "The lord of Dinan lives yet, I trust," he added, in a gentle tone. "If that sword was found where Dinan was lost, by this time there is no other lord of Dinan than yourself; the sword belonged to those who never struck twice." "Indeed!" said Geffrey, pausing as if crossed by a sudden recollection; "thou and I, old man, must talk of this anon. Meantime," turning to the vassalage, "scour the country on every side;

I myself will join the search presently." And he turned his horse's head into the castle-court, followed by the old man in question.

Geffrey Dinan was considerably younger than his brother, and widely different in character. The Baron, though haughty, had nothing of cruelty in his composition, and was as free from guile as he was from fear. The courage indeed of Geffrey was never doubted, and his talents were infinitely more keen; but they were directed early to one object, the securing to himself a degree of power, which, as a younger son, he had found himself excluded from. He had long been forming connections independent of his brother, and no one knew the extent of his influence, though every one but his brother suspected it.

He led the old man through a winding stair into a small chamber, lighted by a single narrow window, and immediately in front of it he placed him in

such a manner, that the sunny gleam fell full on his high and wrinkled forehead and shaggy eyebrows, now grey with age. A torturing feeling of some sort or other was evidently working in his face, but it was not fear. Geffrey saw that it was not; but he suspected something, and, eyeing him sternly as he spake, demanded "whose he called that sword?" "When last I saw that sword, it was in the hands of —— Edmund de Mortimer." He made a pause, before he uttered the last words, and seemed to work himself up to uttering them by a painful exertion. "De Mortimer, old man!" cried Dinan; "he is in the lowest dungeon of this castle. Bethink you what it is you say, and to whom you say it; I am not to be mocked—Hearest thou aught?" He paused—and they heard immediately beneath them, distinct and full, the growl of a lion[a]. "I

[a] It is unnecessary to quote any thing to shew that these animals were often kept in feodal castles. A well-known anecdote of the great Marquiss of

hear," said the old man, "the executioner of Castle-Dinan." "Beware then," said Geffrey, and led him towards a square opening in the floor, down which he bid him look, and just below his feet he saw, glaring in the gloom of the vault, the fierce round eyes of the monster, who was famishing for his prey. "Geffrey Dinan," said the old man quietly, "I had not taken you for that foolish stripling, who would play off tricks of terror on an old and wretched man: think you that I am terrified by your lion? No, young man, I come from a land where the growl of a lion was as little noted as the yelling of a hound; and perchance, old as I am, I might still be a match for a stripling like Geffrey Dinan. But put up your weapon. I come not to injure *you*, at least. True it is that Roger de Mortimer is your prisoner—good cause he has to know it. But

Worcester, when at Raglan castle, would sufficiently illustrate it.

bethink you that there is another Mortimer, whom you deem perchance to be in the Holy Land; but he is returned: yes, he is within a league of your castle, and it was in his hands I saw the sword!" "And who art thou?" said Geffrey. "My name is of little account," replied he; "enough that I have been wronged by Mortimer, that I have been false to him, and shall be true to thee. I trust my life in your hands, and offer to lead you where the worst enemy you have may be found." "Lead me then," said Dinan, "and your reward——" "*My reward!*" said the stranger: "talk not to me of reward."

for any signal of the arrival of his friends at the mouth of the fatal pit; but even the baying of the hound had now ceased to be heard. In defence of Sir Fulke it must be observed, that he was less fully equipped in mail than his formidable antagonist, having on only his buff coat and gorget; no inconsiderable defence however in ordinary cases.

Before they had proceeded far, they came to a place where there was a communication with the upper air, by means of a perpendicular pit. To Dinan, as he looked up, the day light, though appearing only through a circlet of the smallest dimensions, seemed yet more lovely, more to be desired, than all the treasures of the earth that confined him. He gazed on the boughs that shaded and almost completely screened the aperture, and the light that twinkled through them, with the feelings of intense regret, with which we look upon for the last time (as we suppose) what we prize above all things.

de Mortimer." The words appeared to produce an appalling effect, even on the iron heart of Dinan. "And what would you with me?" said he, "unarmed as I am, and in thy power, if thou thinkest to slay me, Mortimer, I promise thee it shall not be without a struggle." "Dinan," said the other, "our houses have long been enemies, but not enemies to the death: go on in silence before me, and your life is safe. Nay," added he, "if you think of lingering here till your men come to the rescue, I slay you instantly:" and he drew back his right arm to strike, while with his left he still kept hold of Dinan's right. The grasp even of his left hand wrenched the mail gauntlet of Dinan with scarce less violence than an armourer's vice. Syr Fulke, powerful man as he was, felt subdued; he submitted, and advanced slowly in the direction of the vault, uncertain whither this unknown and unsuspected passage was to lead, and listening anxiously

for any signal of the arrival of his friends at the mouth of the fatal pit; but even the baying of the hound had now ceased to be heard. In defence of Sir Fulke it must be observed, that he was less fully equipped in mail than his formidable antagonist, having on only his buff coat and gorget; no inconsiderable defence however in ordinary cases.

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"How," he sighed, "could I be ignorant so long of this accursed passage!" Syr Edmund only smiled, sternly enough, and pointed to the passage that led on further, and looked most uninvitingly dark and dismal. "I confide in your pledge," said Dinan, and proceeded onwards, nothing willing.

After a still longer period of darkness, they saw before them the daylight once more, but so distant, it seemed only as a star "of the smallest magnitude," towards which they were advancing. At last they issued forth in a scene the most romantic and extraordinary that can be conceived. It was a cleft or hollow in the rock, (for it could not be called either a glen, or a cave, or a ravine;) but while the space in the centre was extremely small, the rocks rose on every side to a prodigious height, completely fencing it round, and even impending over it; so that while they stood beneath their black and frowning bases, the drops of moisture trickling

from above fell far beyond, into the centre of this natural dungeon. Their sides were partly enlivened, partly saddened, by every species of mountain plant that makes its abode in the rocks, and overgrown with drooping briars, and here and there waving with fern; while from one corner of the rift, just under a huge stone, that having fallen from its place, had been checked and upheld in mid air by the angle of the cliff, from under this singular arch leaped out a little stream, sparkling like crystal, and forming a cascade, fell with incessant noise on the stony floor, then coursing round the cave disappeared at the opposite extremity under a mass of limestone. Dinan had little time to admire the novelty of the scene; for new it was to him, though he was aware that some such a place existed in his domains, under the appellation of Mabel's cave; for Mortimer, without pausing, drew some briars that grew in profusion all around, so as completely to screen

the mouth of the passage; and intimating to Dinan that he must follow his steps, strode across the cave, till he came close under the waterfall itself.

The sun was then "in his meridian tower," and the silver spray of the cataract was tinted with the soft hues of a rainbow, completely circular. But Dinan little thought of noticing the beautiful phœnomenon: his eyes were rivetted on the swarthy countenance of Mortimer, who now had placed himself below the over-hanging rock, so as to stand between it and the waterfall, which formed a crystal arch above him. He pointed to a straggling path that appeared to lead up the rock, slippery as it was with the spray of the stream. Dinan obeyed the action, rather than the words by which it was accompanied, and which were lost in the roar of the torrent: he saw that Mortimer did not choose to give him the option of a retreat, and with difficulty ascended the uncertain stair, till he

came to the very place where the water burst out from the rock. It appeared to be the intention of his guide, that he should enter into the arch itself, from under which issued the stream. At this he could not avoid pausing. "Edmund Mortimer," said he, "I am willing to rely on your word; but if you are seeking my life, I am prepared to dispute it." "I seek it not," said Mortimer very coolly, "I seek only to deliver my father: proceed, it is no time to tarry!" And Dinan, stooping, as well as he could, his uncommon height, entered under the lowly arch of massive rock, which resounded with the stream.

He soon was compelled to proceed on his hands and knees; the path was at once dark, intricate, and rugged, and the stream thundered by with a deafening voice. He began to suspect the good faith of Syr Edmund, much as he had been renowned, before his departure for the Holy Land, for the uprightness of his conduct. "What!

if he should inclose me in this den," thought he: the suspicion was increased, when the little light that entered by the mouth of the cave disappeared on a sudden. A chilling pang, in spite of all his courage, shot through him, as it struck him that this had been already effected, and that Mortimer, by closing the entrance, had left him to perish in a manner the most miserable that the mind of man can conceive, in this dreary vault. All the horrors of hopeless confinement, and a feeling of suffocation, oppressed him at once, and he was attempting to turn round once more, when the hand of Mortimer fell on his foot, and convinced him that it was his giant figure that had obscured the light behind him. "Proceed," said Mortimer, in a voice hollow as the rock that resounded, despite the noise of the stream: and remembering who was behind him, Sir Fulke *did* proceed, sorrowfully enough; and half inclined to believe that all these

successive marvels were nothing but the frightful images of a dream, and that he should awake at last in his own castle of Dinan. His thoughts were interrupted, by finding himself suddenly in the full light of day, while the dry rock unexpectedly came to a close, and before him for many yards the little stream flowed towards him under the vaulted rock, eddying and dimpling in the sun. Gladly he strode through it, and stepped on the margin, where he was instantly seized by some soldiers who were watching there.

CHAP. VI.

"It is Dinan!" they cried. "It is Dinan himself!" "And unarmed!" "And how camest thou hither?" "And what hast thou done with our Lord?" were at once the exclamations of all around him. But Mortimer appeared from the cave, and they were silent. "Place him instantly on the black charger," said he; and, turning to Dinan, "Pledge me your knightly word, De Dinan, that you will not strive to quit your seat, or I shall be constrained, loath as I am, to bind your feet to the stirrups." "I will pledge no such thing," cried Dinan; "I am in the open air, and in my own woods. I am escaped your pitfall, Mortimer; master me you may, but you shall not without a struggle." And accordingly he struggled so long and so violently, that, many as they

were, it cost them much to bind him, and to place him on the steed in question, a Flemish horse, equal to an elephant in strength, and almost in bulk; after which they tied his knightly feet together under his horse's belly.

In a moment after, they were all mounted on steeds that stood ready caparisoned near them, except Mortimer himself, and a boy dressed something like a page, whom Syr Edmund commanded to mount the sole remaining horse, which the other as stedfastly refused. "You are heavy-armed, my Lord, and by this time the woods must be full of Dinan's archers. Listen," said he, laying his slight and slender hand on the mail-clad arm of Mortimer. They paused, and distinctly heard, though at a great distance, in the woods below them, the halloo of a party on the pursuit. Dinan heard also, and was making an effort to reply, but the watchful vassals of Mortimer effectually checked him. "If

Dinan attempt to give a signal, slay him on the spot," said Mortimer, in an under tone to his men; and seizing the boy, he placed him forcibly on the empty saddle. Then adding only the words, "De Annesey's of Brinsop," he was lost at once in the copse-wood into which he plunged.

All this was done on the part of Mortimer and his retinue with a promptitude and decision of action, which shewed that they came prepared for every contingency. They lingered not to ask any questions, and were on the alert with their eyes and ears to catch the word of command. The train, in the mean time, rode rapidly down the green-sward path that traversed the wood; and well it was for them, that the velvet turf deadened the tramp of the horses' feet; they had not otherwise escaped the pursuit of Dinan's followers, who were scouring the forest. Towards the going down of the sun, however, they began to think themselves so far removed from immediate

danger, that they slackened their pace as they skirted a lofty hill, commanding a noble and varied landscape of great extent, in which the towers of Dinan, to their great relief, were no longer to be seen. The captive noble, mean time, who had heard the order given, well knew both the character of his destined host or keeper, (for he might be looked upon in either light,) and the direction of the route. He looked in the centre of the plain for the massive old tower, reared as it is said immediately subsequent to the Conquest over the cathedral, first founded in the days of Athelstan, and he soon descried it embosomed in a profusion of wood, that stretched over all the landscape, while the ranges of the hills of Wales lay blue in the horizon, and the green acclivities of the Malvern approached nearer to the eye. Soon however they quitted the upland, and, avoiding the high road, proceeded by a by-way, serving also (according

to custom) as a water-course in winter, but now clothed with fresh turf, poached here and there by the tread of pack-horses, and overgrown with hazle. Just as they were about, however, to enter the vale where Brinsop lay, and where already they saw the last level beam of the sun sparkling in the broad moat that begirt it, and lighting up the grey ranges of low buildings that constituted the fortified mansion, the eyes of Dinan, watchful for something that might afford a promise of rescue, descried on the hill to his left the first awakening flame of a beacon. "That is a signal sent from Castle-Dinan," thought he; "the country will be roused; I shall escape even yet." The watchful eyes of the page who rode first, and appeared to direct the motions of the party, soon observed the blaze; he drew his reins, and directed the men to wheel out of the road to the right, where there was a little wood. "We will wait here till twilight," said he; "I heard a

horn in Dinmore as we came by, and I doubt not they are all on the look out; so dismount awhile, and suffer the horses to feed: we will enter Brinsop when the sun has been down some time." And accordingly, much to Dinan's disappointment, they withdrew deep within the screen of the thicket, and he had only the satisfaction of seeing the beacon, which had been kindled probably on his account, burn, as the twilight thickened, with fiercer and ruddier glare, till a corresponding flame began to arise on another hill, apparently at an immeasureable distance. We shall take the opportunity of this brief pause, to look back a little to some circumstances which we had not time to advert to before.

Geffrey Dinan was, as we have said, pretty generally suspected of harbouring designs upon the authority of his brother. He was actuated to this, as well by the desire of aggrandizing himself, which led

so many younger brothers of those days astray, as by another motive, namely, of concealed and long cherished animosity. Little as Geffrey was susceptible of any feelings but those connected with his own ambitious views, he had contracted something like the passion of love for the Lady Isabel, the daughter of Mortimer of Wigmore. The frequent hostilities that occurred between the two houses, had been little favourable to his suit; and the Lady Isabel, young as she was, appeared scarcely sensible of the conquest she had made. Still the attachment of Geffrey gathered strength day by day, and with reason, for in a country renowned for beauty, the sole daughter of the house of Mortimer had few that excelled her even in form and features.

At last Geffrey hinted his attachment to his warlike brother. Syr Fulke heard him with astonishment: abhorrence of the Mortimers had grown up in his breast from his

cradle: he had himself occasionally seen the lady, but without for a moment considering her as one whom it was possible for him to love. "Wed a Mortimer!" he cried, with a voice calculated to excite rougher emotions than those which had hitherto reigned in Geffrey's breast. He added but little; but that very evening, unknown to his brother, he surprised the castle of Wigmore, made prisoner the aged Mortimer, and the fair Isabel herself escaped only by the determined valour of a few trusty attendants, and the swiftness of her palfrey. Where, after this, she remained concealed, neither he nor his indignant brother (though he buried his indignation in his breast) had been able to discover. No traces of her retinue were to be found: her palfrey had not been seen any where beyond the neighbourhood of Brinsop Court, the fortified mansion into which Syr Fulke was about to be introduced when we left him; and from that time, till the period with

which our story commences, no tidings of her fate could be learnt. All this time the younger Mortimer was with his sovereign in the Holy Land. Lately, indeed, Geffrey had heard, with a feeling of the most intense interest, that the palfrey he had so often watched from the heights of Bringwood, to behold with its beautiful burden crossing the Temd for Wigmore when their houses were at variance, had been seen with an unknown page near the village and castle of Colun, and in company with some soldiers, suspected to belong to Mortimer. The latter part of the news Syr Fulke had also heard, and swore deeply to visit on De Annesey, whom he suspected of harbouring them, his heaviest retribution. All this tended to increase in Geffrey's breast the feelings of unnatural hostility, with which he already began to regard his brother; and even Syr Fulke, little as he was disposed to harbour suspicion of any one, yet

could not help feeling, that if Geffrey was really so foolish as to admire a Mortimer, he had woefully thwarted his inclinations, and must expect no very friendly feelings towards himself, on the part of his brother.

So much we have thought it necessary to state, of what occurred previous to the commencement of our story; and can only regret, that our method of conducting the narrative, being peculiar to ourselves, the very reverse of beginning *ab ovo*, has prohibited us from introducing the mention of them before.

CHAP. VII.

THE evening was far advanced, when the party found themselves before the gates of Thomas De Annesey. This worthy was a close ally, and a relation by marriage, of Mortimer, but by no means a dependent. On the contrary, he was an inferior baron, of no small importance in those parts, as was testified by the breadth and depth of his moat, the pomp of two draw-bridges that crossed it, and the formidable appearance of his *safe* or dungeon, a narrow building, with a gable unusually peaked, and which, if tradition may be believed, had other terrors, besides those of imprisonment and bonds. They found the portcullis down, the massive gates secured, and the draw-bridge up; while the moon

was now slowly rising over one of the neighbouring hills, (for Brinsop was in the centre of a rich and spacious valley, so placed by the discreet judgment of the forefathers of the said Thomas,) and within the fortress, the deep throat of the ban-dog failed not to salute as she rose, with his hoarse note, the beautiful planet. As they descended the slope and neared the mansion, the howl of the dog was changed to a loud and angry bark, and the centinel on the turret gave the expected challenge. The answer was so satisfactory, that the party proceeded to the brink of the moat to await the lowering of the drawbridge, and the unbarring of the gates; for the gate-ward, not expecting such an interruption, had retired to slumber in his customary nook. The captive Baron cast a sorrowful glance at the strong walls and deep moat that were to confine him: and beside him, in an attitude not less thoughtful, stood the page; while he appeared to be watching

only the puny waves of the moat, as they rippled yellow in the moon-beam, darkened here and there by the black shadows of the walls that fell athwart them. Seeming to recollect himself, he turned suddenly to the soldiers: "See that you blab not of the name and state of your prisoner to the followers of De Annesey," said he. They made a mute signal of obedience, with a respect which, mixed with all their conduct towards him, and somewhat surprised Syr Fulke. "And you, Syr Fulke," addressing himself to the knight, "as you value your life in yonder dungeon, the strongest in Herefordshire, name not your own name." Dinan returned no answer, but internally he thought the threat implied merited some consideration. By this time the gates were unbarred; the drawbridge fell with a quivering shock beside them, and a motley crowd half seen by the moon-light issued forth, and with many interrogatories ushered them the way into the feodal man-

sion. The page with an attendant or two went in search of De Annesey himself.

Meantime the retainers of Mortimer gladly took this opportunity of making a substantial meal after their dangerous service; and happily the larder at Brinsop was never at a loss. "A fine house-keeping you have here," said one of them, as he entered. "What call you the place, where I stabled my nag?" "O that's the old chapel, man." "Chapel! so I thought; and how came ye to turn it into a stable, John Turn-the-bull?" "Why you see we had a stiff siege some twenty years ago, and were badly put to it, and all the tenants crowded into the court with their horses, and their beasts, and hardly room to stir in the house here; and the Baron fretting and fuming all day: so for quiet's sake we were fain to make use of the chapel too." "And who have you brought here at this time of night, knocking up the court-house, and breaking one's rest? and

little enough we have here." "How should I know? Do you think our lord lets us ask after the names of his prisoners? or may be you think he claps up a fellow only now and then, like old De Annesey here." "Troth, you're out there, John of Knockin. It was but a sennight ago old Thomas put up a parcel of Pembruge's[a] men so thick that they were like to be smothered, so we put two or three into the armoury, where they were scared by the ghost." "What ghost?" "O it's ill talking of that so near bed-time; but you must know, (taking a pull at the beaker,) that when the first of this family came into Herefordshire, they came from somewhere towards the south." "From Normandy, you mean," said the more learned John of Knockin, who had followed his Baron to Palestine. "Nay, nay; not but what they came

[a] Of this family was Sir R. Pembruge, of Pembruge, or Pembridge, Knight of the Garter, who died 1375.

from that country long ago; but however the first De Annesey that came into Herefordshire, he came from beyond Severn, that I know; and a terrible fellow he was when his blood was up, worse than this Thomas: and the Cymraeg then were in all these parts: and Sir Roger, so they called him, had seized one they called Hoel-ap-Hofa, and he kept him a long time up in the armoury there, waiting till they should ransom him. Well, instead of ransoming him, they came down upon us in force, (I have heard my father, good man, tell it over again and again,) and there were then very few in the court-house, and a sad stress they were in, and Sir Roger he fought as if he were mad; and they took off the lead of the chapel, so they say, to pour the scalding lead on them in the gate-house. Well, Sir Roger he grew desperate, and swore by St. Michael (they all have a great respect for St. Michael) that his men should eat his dudgeon before they gave in,

or before he would loose his prisoner; and going up to this Hoel, 'You Welsh tyke,' he cried, (but mind you, he spoke in his Norman English,) 'you shall have the worst of it at any rate;' and he banged-to the door of the armoury, that was clenched with iron nails as thick as my shoes, and the windows were grated, and nothing in it but old fashioned harness and bills; so he was like a mouse in a trap, and as he went down the stairs he said, 'Eat thy way through the bars if thou wilt, for by St. Michaël thou shalt have nothing else to eat.' And the same day he took three other prisoners he had, and threw them over the battlements into the moat, before the face of them all. So you see Sir Roger was such a dragon, they were wearied out, and marched away at last: and then our people wanted to put up the armour in the armoury, but Sir Roger he would never hear of it, some how or other, and he put it off from day to day, till at last he was

killed in a fray near Hereford cross; and the armoury was never opened for many and many a year, till this De Annesey, who recks nothing about ghost or any thing else either, opened it to clap up the prisoners as I said, and then we found the bones of this Hoel in a corner of the room, but not a rag of his dress, nor his shoes, nor his cap, nor any thing but a single glove of mail he had on, as if he had gnawed them all before he died; and all the old rusty bills and maces were there lying about, just as they were before the great leaguer; and there was a banner that dropped to pieces on being touched, but I saw the lion and dragon on it as plain as I see you." Here the story suddenly came to a close, for John Turn-the-bull, looking full at his auditor, perceived he was enjoying a most comfortable sleep, as were also all those about him who belonged to Mortimer's train. As for De Annesey's men, they were too well persuaded of the authenticity

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of the ghost-story that was about to ensue, (for John had not yet reached the pith of the narrative,) and too much engrossed by thrilling interest in the narrative, to yield to the drowsy influence.

CHAP. VIII.

IT was a still evening on the banks of Colun. The sun was on the verge of the horizon, and as the evening was that of a holiday, none of the customary sounds of rural labour were heard to break the silence of the valley. The wheel of the castle-mill, forgetting its usual incessant clacking, hung motionless in its pivot. The voice of the ploughman chiding his cattle was heard no more from the narrow fields of arable, encompassed by copsewood, that spread over the valley. The clank of the pack-horse was not heard, nor their long file seen descending the huge heathy swell that rose above the village, and was still dignified by the title of the forest of Colun, though destitute now of a

single tree. Nevertheless, as Mortimer wound his way down that steep descent, he distinguished the distant murmur of a crowd, though broken by the mountain rivulet that brawled between; and now and then a shout of merriment arose, that betokened that the inhabitants of this sequestered glade were engaged in celebrating on the green the festival of the saint. "Fitzalan," thought he, "will be there himself, he loves such meetings;" and that way he proceeded to bend his steps.

Among the rustic crowd, however, assembled on the spot, the venerable figure of old Fitzalan was not to be seen. The sport was the primitive pastime of foot-ball, most devoutly followed by the youth of the village; while the maids and matrons looked on in a party of their own, enjoying the vicissitudes of the boisterous game; their spirits enlivened by the fineness of the evening, and the opportunity afforded to themselves for hearing and communicating

gossip. The appearance of Mortimer excited no astonishment among them, for he was now habited like a peasant. And, excepting that his height and commanding features drew upon him the eyes of some of the village fair, he passed off unnoticed; when, after vainly exploring every side in hopes of meeting Fitzalan, he proceeded to the castle.

The castle of Colun already bore on its towers the sober hues of age. Unlike that of Dinan, it was not distinguished by all the pomp and circumstance of a feodal fortress. No banner was displayed from the turret; one solitary watchman sate on the keep, and looked towards the wide and bleak Welsh mountains, whence they were most in the habit of apprehending hostility. No armour flashed on the battlements; no military retainers were seen thronging the gates, or hanging idly over the drawbridge, which (a sign of security) was down. Nevertheless, though seated only on an artificial mound of mo-

derate height, the castle of Colun was safe in the strength of its massive walls, and long tenanted by a family of great power, which ended at last in the house of Arundel, and finally in the Dukes of Norfolk.

As Mortimer crossed the little brook beside it, he met the stately person of Fitzalan himself, descending to water his own steed after a ride. He was old, but unbroken by years, and his cheek still retained the glow of health and exercise: the short beard, however, that edged his cheek was white as snow; the rest of his head was closely covered by a cap. He sat erect in his seat, and seemed likely to do so for many a year. His sight however appeared a little to have failed him, or Mortimer's dress had effectually concealed the wearer; for it was not till he had twice exclaimed, in a voice the tones of which could not be mistaken, "Fitzalan!" that he started, and cordially welcomed him. He turned his steed and dismounted, (probably for the sake of hear-

ing more distinctly,) and at once entered into a conversation, that shewed how closely they were knit together in the same cause. "Dinan at Brinsop! A prisoner! Fulke de Dinan! That is well indeed; but how did that befall?" Mortimer gave a hasty account of his adventure with the knight of Dinan. "And what followers have you here at this time, Sir Hugh?" "Why very few, very few. Let me see. Black Forester is away into Wales with my best —— and ——" "How many could you muster by night-fall to-morrow?" "To-morrow night? let me see. There's myself, and five or six archers I keep constantly about me." "*Yourself*, Sir Hugh?" To be sure. I have nobody else to trust to here; but there are a parcel of idle fellows playing on the green there, I think I could get together a good party of them by that time; and you, Mortimer, where are your men now?" "One party is with Eglamour, at Brinsop." "Eglamour! who is he?" "A

new follower of mine. Then I have parties watching about Wigmore, and Robert Turbeville is with a party in Bringwood, that Geffrey Dinan little dreams off." "Well, but what is now your purpose? Surely you can ransom old Sir Roger by means of Dinan." "Ah, Sir Hugh, you know but little of this Geffrey; he will leave his brother in De Annesey's old dungeon as long as I please, I fear me; so what I purpose is, to storm the castle." "Storm the castle? Storm Castle-Dinan?" "Even so," replied Mortimer coolly. "See you not that the Montgomeries[a] can do all they list in the west country here. Ere a sennight shall pass over our heads, it will be readily known where Dinan is bestowed, and then if his brother will not rescue him, his followers will. His Seneschal De Bourg is a man of trust: the Lasoys too are allied to Dinan; and they are too near old De Annesey, to let him rest in that den of his. Besides, it

[a] Of this family was Fulke de Dinan.

will soon be known that I am returned, and then every thicket in the forest, and every hollow tree in Bringwood and Mochtree, will be searched for me. Nay, I suspect that even now Geffrey Dinan knows of it; for that white-haired villain, Bertrand, has not been seen this day or two; I always suspected him sinee we quarrelled over sea: he has gone to Dinan, I doubt not." "And where in the mean time have you placed the lady Isabel? Is she safe?" "Not long ago she was at De Annesey's." "At De Annesey's? At Brinsop? Surely my own poor castle, Sir Knight, were better protection to the lady, than the roof tree of a wild liver like De Annesey." "Nay, I pray you be not angry, good Sir Hugh; Isabel by this time is no longer there; I have disposed of her as my evil state at present allows: she is content to share the danger with me. One night more, and we shall either be lords of Wigmore again, or be at rest for ever. And now after having set-

tled all, let us meet the lady Maude with cheerful countenances." Stay," said Sir Hugh, "the place of meeting?" "The weeping-cross of Bringwood." "'Tis well, and the hour?" "An hour before sunset." "Well, I will be there in time:—nay, not a word, you shall find me as good a man-at-arms as the youngest amongst you. And yet I must needs think it a desperate thing to assault Castle-Dinan with so few soldiers as we have; but come what will, I am prepared." And with these words, he led the way over the drawbridge.

The porter at the gate received his steed; and Sir Hugh, stepping through the gate-house, under three impending portcullises, and through two huge gates into a spacious court-yard, went across it into a hall lighted by loftier windows, though extremely narrow, than the rest of the Gothic pile. Then after delivering one or two unimportant directions to his household, he was about to bid Mortimer

by his name follow him to his chamber; but the other, more mindful of his disguise, prevented him, by enquiring, in as humble a tone as he could assume, "when he would please to command his attendance?" "Even now," replied the old knight, and led the way through a succession of winding stairs, till they arrived at a little chamber, whose narrow pointed windows overlooked the stream of Colun at a vast depth below. The sun was setting red, and cast through the open casement a rich ruddy hue, on the pannelled walls of polished oak, carved with the innumerable quarterings of the house of Fitzalan: while where the casements were closed, the glass, stained with glowing colours, heightened the beauty of the evening tints. Here Mortimer was met by one, whose cheek and beating bosom betrayed to him the terrors she had endured in his absence, the joy she felt at his safe return.

Maude Fitzalan was the sole daughter

of the house of Colun, and yet was her beauty destined to be her only dower. The fief of her father was to revert to the male line; but all this mattered little to Mortimer, who was yet a youth, and his father still the lord of Wigmore. He was older; but even while yet a boy, and the favourite of Sir Hugh, in his frequent hunting and hawking days, he had felt for the little blue-eyed girl an attachment, which gradually matured into deeper love. But his martial prince departed for the Holy Land, and Edmund Mortimer, despite his growing passion, had gladly joined himself to his crusading standard. It was with more than girlish grief at the loss of a companion and play-mate that Maude beheld his departure. Meantime years rolled away, and Fulke de Dinan had stormed the castle of Wigmore, and made prisoner the father of Mortimer; and he returned, (unknown to any one, but a few trusty friends,) and found almost all his

wide inheritance in the west in the possession of his foes. Those in whom he most confided at this dangerous juncture, were the rough Baron of Brinsop, and the *good Syr Hugh*, as in his own neighbourhood he was commonly called. But if he found Syr Hugh the same every way that he had left him, it was not so with his daughter: instead of a pretty girl, just on the verge of womanhood, she was now in the full bloom of beauty, the acknowledged pride of the vales of Temd and Colun, and the admired one of all the neighbouring youth of gentle blood. To Mortimer however she was still the same. He saw, and all his former feelings were at once ripened into love. The dangerous situation in which he stood left him little time to delay the declaration of it. He had declared it, and the slender hand of Maude Fitzalan had been pledged to his, in token of their future alliance.

CHAP. IX.

IT behoves us now to return to the hapless Knight of Dinan, whom we left in no enviable situation. He slept, as might be supposed, but little in his new abode, the *safe* of Brinsop, which happened at that time to be tenanted by no other captive; a circumstance deserving of mention. The inconveniences of his present lodging struck him pretty forcibly, as he sate sleepless under the huge iron ring, to which he was fettered. He would have supposed the vault to be below the moat, from the damp which (as he laid his palm to the rugged walls) he felt trickling down in streamlets, but that his conductors had pointed out to him with a significant nod a dark low-browed passage, which led, as they told him, to the water; and by which,

as they further intimated, some of the unruly prisoners had occasionally made their exit from the dungeon. "Even my own dungeons are better than this," muttered the disconsolate Syr Fulke. "Your dungeons! And what dungeons have you, I pray? An outlaw, I warrant, sent here by Edmund of Dimwood, as if we had not enough to do to quell the country hereabouts without meddling with the Shropshire marches?" Syr Fulke was on the point of replying with great indignation, and thereby disclosing his rank and name, but he recollected the caution given him by the page, and was silent.

For many a weary hour did he watch, for lack of something else, the moonlight, through a narrow loop-hole far above his head, now clear and bright, now waxing paler and more pale, and sometimes lost altogether, while the watch-dogs in the court, by their occasional howls, gave signal whenever the planet

broke out with an unwonted gleam of splendour, and failed not to rouse the half-slumbering Dinan. Whenever he thus for a few moments sank into a state of unconsciousness, the dark walls of the dungeon melted from before his eyes, and he saw in their stead the spacious courts and lofty towers of his own castle of Dinan, but haunted at the same time by a secret consciousness, that some cause of sorrow was about to burst upon his remembrance. Then a succession of troubled images rose upon his mind, and at last he seemed to be exploring a gloomy passage of interminable extent, pursued by a figure in black, on which he had not dared to look, when again and again he was roused by the howl of the ban-dogs. "Dent-de-Sang!" thought Dinan, "I would it were thy voice, as I fancied it was, breaking my rest on an autumn morning."

At last, when the moon had disappeared altogether, and the temporary

gloom was on the point of yielding to the grey of morning, the dogs burst out into a louder and more furious bark, which effectually startled Syr Fulke. He jumped up, forgetting where he was; but he was checked by his chain, and fell upon the rough floor of the vault. The tide of recollection then burst over him. It was evident that something important had befallen, for even the walls of the dungeon, albeit of thickness equal to the dimensions of the dungeon itself, did not exclude the signals of preparation within the court. *Without*, Dinan fancied he distinguished a voice that was familiar to him, summoning the mansion; but the distance and the tumult that reigned prevented his hearing distinctly. Apparently the summons, whatever were the words, produced but little effect; for after a brief and rough answer, in a voice which Dinan knew to be De Annesey's, summed up in three emphatic monosyllables, "Do

your worst!" immediately he heard the word of command given. The clarions flourished loud and clear, and as they ceased, he heard the arrows rattle against the targets of the defendants, and the bullets sent from the sling, as they sung over the battlements: in return, the vassalage of Brinsop set up a ferocious shout, and the cross-bows twanged over head.

What at that moment would Dinan have given only for the open air of heaven, and the freedom of his hands! The subject of contention, as he believed, while his freedom or captivity were thus hotly contested, was he to sit idle in his miserable dungeon, and hear the arrows whistle overhead that were to decide his fate? He did not tug at his chains, he knew that were in vain; but he threw himself on the floor of the vault in bitterness of spirit.

The retainers of De Annesey were too much accustomed to their (almost daily) task, to raise any unnecessary tumult. Accord-

ingly after the first bustle of preparation, Dinan could distinguish nothing from within the fortress but the tramp of armed men, and the incessant twang of bows and cross-bows. But from without, the sounds were more various: the clarions kept sounding to the charge; the leaders stormed, the soldiers shouted; the horsemen gallopped about; the helms and targets rattled with one incessant shower of arrows; and ever and anon a suppressed groan, or a shriek of agony that could not be suppressed, were heard. "The moat is so wide and so deep," thought Dinan, "that they will never get at the gates to batter them; they will be constrained to leave it to a siege," he added with a sigh; and, turning his eyes to the window above his head, he would fain have strained up to its malignant height, but in vain.

To his surprise the door opened, and Thomas De Annesey announced himself more by his rough voice, than by the appearance

of his figure in the murky vault. "Dinan!" he said.—"Yes, marvel not, I know your name right well; I will free you from this dungeon on two conditions: that you pledge yourself to release old Mortimer from his prison; and to render back to me the lands your fathers seized by Temd side." "Never," replied Sir Fulke, "never: Mortimer perchance I might release; but to be stripped of my broad lands by Thomas De Annesey, never." "'Tis well," replied the other calmly: "you are ague-proof then, Syr Knight." "It matters not to me," said Syr Fulke resolutely: "I never did change my mind, nor ever will I; so say no more about it. And now tell me, I pray, since it cannot harm you to do so, who are these that are fighting for my rescue?" "As far as I can see, it is your brother Geffrey." "Indeed! that's strange enough," replied Dinan, a good deal astonished at this instance of fraternal regard. "And what force has he?"

"Trow you I mean to answer that question?" replied De Annesey, looking archly: "No, no, Syr Knight, you will not know aught of that from me; so as you will not restore my land, I must leave you to your fate:" and closing the door with many a bar, he returned to the battlements.

By this time Geffrey (for it was he that commanded) had begun to think that he should not succeed in taking the place by a coup-de-main. He caused a parley to be sounded, and advanced to interrogate De Annesey. He demanded haughtily, "how long he meant to harbour that traitor Mortimer?" "Traitor!" cried one of the retainers of the Earl, unconsciously drawing his bow. "Mortimer!" cried De Annesey, "I told thee before, Dinan, I have him not here. How should I? you know right well yourself, Geffrey, that he is gone to the Holy Land; where none of your house ever went, Dinan. I thought you were come to look for another, than

Mortimer." Hereupon Geffrey turned and spake apart with the old man, who had undertaken to guide him where he should find Mortimer; and who, true to his word, though a traitor to his master, had led the forces of Dinan to Brinsop, where he expected to have found him. But instead of accompanying his prisoner to Brinsop, Mortimer, as we have seen, had turned aside to arrange with Sir Hugh Fitzalan, his plan of assaulting Dinan. Once more advancing to the walls, Geffrey cried out, "De Annesey: it is in vain to think of escape; there is no one in all this country to lend you succour: light up your beacon, and see who will ride to the rescue; sound your clarions, and see whether your tenantry will dare to come in: while I, if I only fire the copse-wood there on the hill, ere night there will be the Lascys here, and Pembruge's men, who have to thank you for your fray yesterday sennight, old De Annesey. Nay, if I should be content

only to sit still here, and keep you close within that muddy moat of yours, you must perish by famine. Be wise, yield up the Mortimer, and we leave you scatheless." "Geffrey," replied the Squire, totally unmoved, "I do not pretend to speak with so smooth a tongue as you; but I have only one thing to say: and first, I do not resent your doubting my word solemnly given, because I should probably do the same by you, and also I hope to repay it presently, by a bolt from a cross-bow, or a thrust of my broad-sword: as for starving us out, leave that to me; I warrant me, I am enough to take care of myself in that respect. As for the Lascys and that fool Pembruge, besides yourself, Dinan, I dare you to the trial. Those I have I will keep, be sure of that, whoever they may be. There they are," added he, pointing to the *safe*, where a monkey was carved on the highest pinnacle, grinning with hideous mockery, and playing on a

viol. "See, the very walls defy you." A shout from his followers, so loud that the hills in the neighbourhood rang to it again and again, followed this magnanimous speech, and the arrows fell like hail from the walls.

CHAP. X.

AFTER a short contest, Geffrey became aware that it was to no purpose to persist in the assault at present, and, withdrawing his men a little from the fortress, he left them to contemplate at their leisure the banner of De Annesey, which bore a lion and a dragon combatant, as it floated from the turret head; and to listen to the insulting shouts of the victorious party, while he made arrangements for a blockade, under De Bourg the seneschal, and prepared for his own return to Dinan. On this occasion he changed his steed; the ill-fated charger that he chose to bear him was perfectly fresh, belonging in fact to a neighbouring franklin, of the most beautiful glossy black, without a single white hair about him, save the star on his

forehead. As Dinan, mounted on his noble horse, rode through the ranks of his vassals, they shrunk at the fierceness of his looks, and eyed, with a feeling almost of superstitious awe, the sable charger he managed with such perfect skill, the black harness, and dark but noble features of the rider.

Ere he parted, Dinan ordered the old man to be secured: the other, with perfect indifference, heard the command issued that his feet should be made fast under the horse's belly, and, without uttering a word, followed in sullen silence the retreating cavalcade. One thing alone tended to compose the irritated soul of Geffrey. He doubted not but Syr Fulke, however strangely it might have happened, had fallen into the hands of the Mortimers; and was equally convinced in his own mind, that he had been conveyed to Brinsop, however the worthy owner of the mansion might choose to

deny the fact. "But suppose," thought this exemplary brother, "suppose De Annesey should give him up; what will become of me then?" He unconsciously checked his bridle at the thought. "But no: I know De Annesey right well; sooner will he starve himself, and all his garrison, than he will raise that portcullis of his to let us in. I am glad at any rate I did not call in the Lasoys and Pembruge; they hate him so, they would never have rested till they had taken the place: no, let things go on quietly; I shall take time, and secure to myself a place of retreat at any rate, in case Syr Fulke should appear to claim his rights somewhat sooner than I expect: but I must not dally." And he smote his good steed, and rode rapidly onward.

Towards noon he halted, and while seated in the rude and timber-roofed hall of the hostelrie, or inn, with certain of his train, there entered shortly after, fol-

lowed by a single strange soldier, a youth, whose slender frame was apparently worn out by excessive fatigue. He started at the sight of the armed crowd before him, and at first manifested something like an inclination to retreat, which would infallibly in those ticklish times have endangered his life. A look from his attendant (not unobserved of the keen eye of Geffrey Dinan) led him to advance, and, after a humble inclination to the baron, to seat himself on a settle in a corner of the apartment, till some one should think him worthy of a share of their attention. His features were so shaded and concealed by the bonnet he wore, as he stooped and leaned his cheek upon his hand, while his long plume dropped over them, that little of them could be discerned: what was seen of them, however, appeared far too delicate for the sufferings he seemed to have undergone; and his hand was even

femininely small and delicate. His follower meantime shewed unequivocal signs of great embarrasment, turning his eyes in every direction but that in which they might encounter those of the baron. All this however availed him nothing: the retainers of Dinan began to murmur among themselves; and Dinan, though he deigned not a word, kept eyeing them both with a glance keen as that of a falcon, and cold and merciless as that of a snake that watches his prey. At length the strange soldier could stand it no longer; he left the room abruptly, muttering in a hurried manner something about his horse. A nod from Geffrey sent three of his retainers after him; while the baron kept his piercing eyes fixed on the boy before him. Apparently however there was something in the little he saw of his face, which excited recollections foreign to the train of his thought, for he stooped his eye to the ground, and his attendants

with wonder observed it to be half moistened by a tear.

Meantime the hostess had brought refreshments, and placed them before the stranger. On being told of it, he raised his face, pale and languid, but with features the most delicate; and in doing so, his eyes encountered those of the old man, who had acted as guide to Geffrey Dinan, and who now sate in an obscure corner, apparently desirous of avoiding observation; his hands manacled, and his eyes fixed with an inexplicable look on the young stranger. "Bertrand!" cried the boy in amazement, without being conscious that the words had passed his lips. Bertrand's countenance fell; and a moment after, his brow was wrung with the agony of despair. At this, the boy perceived what he had done: he turned his eyes fearfully towards the Baron, and sank trembling on the oaken settle. He had reason to tremble; the single

word he had uttered, was sufficient to confirm the suspicions of Geffrey: he rose, and all his followers started up at the same moment; while Geffrey fiercely demanded who Bertrand was? "And who art thou too? And whence comest thou?" "His name," the other replied faintly, "was Eglamour; he was journeying from Hereford." "And who was Bertrand? And where had he known him?" At this, the old man rose and said, "Syr Baron, how greatly I have sinned, I need not say; I have been a traitor, and yet the shame of my attempt rests upon me, while the attempt was fruitless. I sought, by leading you upon Earl Mortimer, to fill up the measure of your revenge and mine: I have failed, and glad am I now that it was so. Punish me then if you list for my crime, but not of *you* have I merited punishment. For this youth" (the boy turned upon him his full dark eye) "I know little or

nothing of him," continued he much embarrassed. "Stay," cried the boy, who had summoned courage, though his voice almost choked in his throat; "I too am a follower of Mortimer, I seek not to deny it; it was there I met Bertrand: my life, I know, is in your hands; take it." "Boy," replied Geffrey, "there is yet one way, and only one, to preserve it. You know, doubtless, the haunts of that traitor?" "Whom call you traitor?" replied the youth, with a scornful look. "Be still: on condition you lead me to one of these, you live. But bring in," he continued, "the other fellow; let us see whether his story agrees; he will guide us, I warrant, if thou wilt not." The boy appeared to pause a minute, while with both hands he clasped his forehead. At last, he exclaimed, "I will do it: I will guide you where Mortimer was when I parted from him." "Then thou art safe," replied Geffrey, while some-

what of contempt mingled in his accent. "What says yonder fellow?"

The soldier was apparently less terrified when actually in the gripe of his enemies, than he had been when he only was apprehensive of becoming so. To the interrogations that were put to him, he answered with a good deal of composure, that the boy's name was Eglamour, that his own was Robert of Cleobury, or Cleobury Robin: he allowed that he was in the service of Mortimer, and that he parted from him the preceding day. When demanded where; he replied, "in Bringwood chase." When questioned as to the particular spot; he made answer, that he knew it not, one part of the forest being, as he observed, very much like another. "Near the Weeping-cross," cried the boy, with a resolute accent. The soldier opened his eyes still wider with amazement, but muttered an assent.

" Saddle the horses instantly," cried Dinan; " lead on young man, and remember with whom you have to deal."

CHAP. XI.

WE return to Mortimer. On the morn of that eventful day, which was to see him either restored to the castle and domains of his ancestors, or a banished man, nay, probably a lifeless corpse, he rode hastily from the towers of Colun, so long beloved, and cast but *one* parting look over the brown slope of the hills, towards the secluded valley, and the dark grey walls, ere he spurred his steed, and disappeared among the oaken copse-wood. He paused not, till he arrived at the entrance of that subterraneous passage, so fatal to Dinan. This passage[a] was unknown to any of

[a] The authority for the existence of the passage alluded to, is the current, though probably errone-

Dinan's retainers, as well as to himself. It had been originally wrought by one of Mortimer's ancestors, when they were the prevailing party, and had temporary possession even of the castle of the Montgomeries. It was carried beneath the course of the Temd, till it ended under Castle-Dinan itself. The entrance at this end however remained closed, and the existence of the passage, as may be supposed, was one of the most profound secrets of the house of Wigmore, and confided only to the heads of the family. Even Mabel's cave, as it was called, was known but to few, and those few were far from entertaining any suspicions that it concealed the mouth of a passage, which led into the

ous, tradition of the neighbourhood. Tradition, indeed, extends this passage from Ludlow to Wigmore castles, a distance of nine miles at least. I have not ventured to follow tradition quite so far as this. Similar passages existed, or have been said to exist, in most old castles.

heart of the strongest fortress of the west. Its various approaches were, as we have seen, so concealed by natural circumstances, as to be discoverable to none that were not possessed of the secret. It happened that at that time the secret rested with Edmund Mortimer alone. He had ventured singly into the vault, and, emerging by a bye-passage in front of the castle, instead of pursuing the main course of the mine, he had attracted the observation of Dinan; and when he found that the Baron had entered the wood alone, and would probably discover his secret, had attacked him, and, as we have seen, succeeded strangely in bearing him off his prisoner.

On the present occasion, he was determined once more to examine the passage, previous to his final attack. He left his horse at the cottage of an adherent, and, entering along with the little brook the low-browed cavern's mouth, retraced the way by which he had come with the ill-starred lord of

Dinan, and groping along an eternity, as it seemed, of gloom, he heard at length the river murmur faintly above his head, as it fell over the weir of the castle-mill, and at last, as he conjectured, stood under the mighty mass of Castle-Dinan itself. For here the mine came to a sudden stop. A huge stone lay over his head, and extending his hands, he felt on every side, but that by which he had come, the damp earth of the vault, and the chill of the stone that closed the mouth of the passage. To one less adventurous than Syr Edmund Mortimer, even his present situation would have been one of considerable alarm. The close and stifling air of the vault hung heavy on his breath. The approach to the cave by which he had entered might at that moment be centinelled by Dinan's rangers; besides, his time was brief, the sun was high in heaven when he had entered the mine, and an hour ere sunset he was to repair to meet Syr Hugh at the

Weeping-cross of Bringwood. But all this little affected the mind of Mortimer: he paused, and laid his ear close to the wall of the vault, to discover, if possible, by that sense, whether he were now under the castle. At length he heard a sound, but so indistinct, and apparently so distant, as scarcely to convince him that he had attained his object in reaching the castle. The sound at length died away altogether. And now Mortimer tried whether it were possible to stir the enormous block of stone that lay across the vault. For a long time it resisted all his efforts, and he was about to desist, but collecting his might he made one more attempt: the mighty mass moved a little, a *very* little, but sufficient to satisfy Syr Edmund, that this was the entrance he was in search of. He was surprised, indeed, that the light did not appear as he moved the stone; but no; all continued gloomy and dark as ever.

And now he hastily retraced his way, gained

the mouth of the cave, and, after having warily cast his eyes in every direction, to detect any foes that might be lurking there, he put his horn to his mouth, and gave a single blast, brief but distinct. It was speedily answered. A troop of horsemen, the chosen of his vassalage, issued from the wood at full speed; men whose swarthy features, and faces seamed here and there with scars, betokened that they had followed their lord to the Holy Land. There were others among them, however, equally martial in their appearance, but who still bore in their cheeks the bloom of *merrie Ynglonde*.

A few words from Mortimer explained his purpose. "Yet remember, ere you venture on it," he said, "that you peril your lives for me, in entering this passage, should it lead otherwise than I have been told. Should it open into the guard-room, or the dungeons, or the castle-court, I fear we have only to sell our

lives as dearly as we may. Pause then before you attempt it; I demand this service of none." The soldiers looked on one another for a moment, but it was only to read in each other's eyes the resolution which inspired them all. One of them spoke: "Let us lose no time, Syr Edmund, there is none here that will remain behind." "Stay," said Mortimer, and he smiled, "one of you must needs remain, to ride and warn Syr Hugh of our attempt: let him fall upon Castle-Dinan at the time appointed, and we shall carry it. Which of you will go on this errand?" They all stood still. "We will cast lots," at last said Rowland of Holdgate[b], "and heaven forefend it should fall on me!" After this had been arranged, they entered the mouth of the cave.

[b] The name of a village near.

CHAP. XII.

AFTER having arrived at the extremity of the passage, it cost them much labour in attempting to remove the mass that closed it; the narrowness of the passage permitting only a very small number at once to toil at it. At length the ponderous mass was removed, and Mortimer, as it fell with a sullen sound, paused, to hear the challenge of the centinel, or the shout of the astonished inmates of the castle; but he could distinguish nothing. Then advancing slowly out of the vault, he began to grope his way up the no less obscure passage that led down to it. He felt indeed some steps under his feet, but they were steep and difficult. His fol-

lowers came on at his heels, taking care so to manage their arms, that they might not clash against the walls. The principal danger was, that they might be discovered ere they had emerged from the passage. "Once on open ground, and in fair day-light," thought each of them, "and I should not fear." At length their leader paused; he descried before him a faint greyness on the walls, which betokened their approach to the light, and listening, he heard for the first time some indistinct sound: he gave a sign to his followers to draw their swords; but, though they had thus far advanced upon their way, the last of the band had not yet emerged from the mine. As they proceeded, the light grew stronger and stronger, till they beheld before them a loop-hole, admitting a yellow gleam of light, which evidently proceeded from some open court, and slanted wide and thin through the murky atmosphere. The passage was somewhat more spacious,

and allowed them to wait till those behind had drawn up. And here they found what appeared likely effectually to oppose their further progress. Under the narrow window, before alluded to, the passage came to a sudden close; no egress was to be found on any side; no concealed outlet; no secret stair: the stones on all sides were cruelly firm, and securely cemented; and the enraged followers of Mortimer heard from without the cheerful shouts of a party, who were actually playing at ball against that part of the castle under which they were standing. The bells of the collegiate church too, which stood not far off, were, for some cause or other, ringing a merry peal, while Mortimer, furious at this disappointment, was searching with his sword every chink and crevice in the wall. At last he discovered a huge stone, as it appeared, less securely cemented, though of great height, and wide in proportion; it was apparently only a slab of limestone

reared on its end; and Mortimer, at once suspected that it had been so placed, to secure to himself or any of his race the power of entering when they pleased the castle of Dinan. All his hopes revived in a moment; he dashed himself with all his force against the mighty slab of stone: it loosened from the wall, it tottered, and fell with a thundering sound; and Mortimer scarcely could check himself from falling with it down into the castle-court.

There all at first was blank amazement; then uproar and confusion. The few that were there engaged in their game fled precipitately, as Mortimer rushed upon them sword in hand: he ran to the gates, where stood the gate-ward with his curtle-axe in hand, and dealt him a blow on the casque that felled him to the ground; then leaping through the open wicket, by his single might he drew up the massy drawbridge, that connected the

inner castle or citadel, in which they were, with the area of the outer ballium. It was well for Mortimer, on this occasion, that his followers were men tried in arms, and of determined courage, for it was only by desperate efforts that they kept the wicket, so as to secure him a return within the gates. He entered, flung-to the wicket, barred it securely, turned the huge key in the lock, and then cast it over into the inner moat. This done, with his good blade in his hand, again he leaped upon his foes, and again put them to the route.

The contest, however, was long and doubtful: at first the suddenness of the attack, which seemed to the garrison positively supernatural, and the desperate valour of Mortimer's men, whose only chance of safety was in victory, had made them recoil to a cautious distance; but gradually they took heart, and gathered strength; the centinels poured down from the walls

and towers, and after a furious struggle, Mortimer, bleeding with many wounds, and frantic with rage, was forced back into the keep. The keep of this ancient castle is placed immediately beside the entrance of the citadel. On securing this entrance their safety depended, and here accordingly Mortimer and his men were determined to make good their ground, or to perish on the spot. From the top of the keep they hurled down every thing they could find, to annoy the enemy beneath, and from the loop-holes galled them with incessant arrows. Meantime the court without was crowded with a countless multitude, armed and unarmed, who only half understood the cause of the fray, and rent the sky with their various and dissonant shouts, while they showered their arrows into the castle, by which their own party were the principal sufferers.

I am compelled, for a time, to turn away

my eyes from the martial tumult, to the shades of Bringwood, and the merry-men of Geffrey Dinan.

CHAP. XIII.

As Geffrey approached the Weeping-cross, (an antique cross of stone, once situated in the centre of the forest, long after sung of by our divine poet as the haunt of Comus,) his guide approached, and with a timid voice begged to be heard apart for an instant. "With me, boy?" cried Geffrey, with something like suspicion. "With you, lord of Dinan: I am unarmed, as you see; and bound, as I have cause to feel;" and he cast a glance on the rude ropes that wrung his arms. Geffrey motioned to his followers to depart for a little space. "Geffrey," said the boy, in an accent that, he knew not why, thrilled through the soul of the Baron, "I have

led you, as you bade, to the Weeping-cross of Bringwood, and here it is that Mortimer is wont to be found; and now I pray you, pause a moment; one single shout even from a voice feeble as mine, and you are captive or slain; Mortimer has other friends than those you wot of: pause a moment, and promise to free from prison the Earl, and receive your brother in exchange; he is in De Annesey's dungeon."

Disappointed in all his aims; betrayed into peril of his life; assured that his brother would return to dispossess him of his power; braved in his own woods by a prisoner and a boy; rage filled at once the soul of Dinan: not knowing what he did, he drew his sword, and drove it at the unfortunate captive. Though prepared for this, the natural fear of death caused the boy to shrink from the blow; but it reached him not the less, and he fell senseless on the neck of his palfrey. The soldiers of Dinan looked on in mute amaze-

ment, having heard nothing of what had passed; but the old man Bertrand, with a fearful groan, had made an effort to spring forward; his voice choked in his throat; at last he syllabled forth, "Dinan! Merciful heavens! The Lady Isabel!" The words fell like a thunderbolt on the unhappy Dinan. Scarce comprehending their import, he cast a terrified glance on those pale but beautiful features, which now were disclosed, the bonnet and plume having fallen off. He hurled far from him the fatal sword, and hiding his face in his hands, passed, in one bitter moment, an age of misery. Suddenly, however, the woods rang to a ferocious shout, and, bursting from their ambush, the followers of Fitzalan came like a whirlwind upon Dinan's wearied party. The warlike spirit of the Montgomeries instinctively then lighted up for the last time the soul of Geffrey. He snatched a sword from a retainer, made at the thickest of his foes, and twice cut

his way completely through them. He heeded not—he felt not the blows that fell fast upon him; and had the day depended on his arm alone, the Fitzalans had been surely foiled. But, wearied with their previous fighting and long march, and inferior in numbers, his men were soon forced to fly; and though, desperate and reckless of his life, Geffrey turned again and again, and faced his pursuers, at last, when left alone in the woods, and his horse wounded under him, he too was forced to fly: though he fled only, as he thought, to bring up fresh men from Castle-Dinan.

His steed was fleet, and he knew every track in the forest, and his enemies were a good bow-shot behind him, when he issued from the wood on the expanse of ferny downs that fronts, from the other side of the river, the castle of the Montgomeries. Here he was about to turn his steed down the

steep and narrow way, that led to the river side, when he was suddenly confronted by a troop, whom (from the pennon bearing *argent, a chief azure*) he knew to belong to Fitzalan's party. He was compelled to fly in another direction. The downs along which he continued his flight, terminate above the river in a frightful precipice of prodigious height, saving the pathway by which he had hoped to descend. His only chance of escape was now to ride the whole length of them, and enter the town-walls by another gate. In doing so, he cast his eyes on the castle of his forefathers. Horrible sight! The banner of Mortimer was streaming on the keep! He maddened at the spectacle. His enemies were close behind him, thirsting for his blood; his castle was taken, and all retreat cut off; his hands were stained with the blood of her he loved: he buried his spurs in his horse's flanks, and drove him at the precipice. Urged to

inner castle or citadel, in which they were, with the area of the outer ballium. It was well for Mortimer, on this occasion, that his followers were men tried in arms, and of determined courage, for it was only by desperate efforts that they kept the wicket, so as to secure him a return within the gates. He entered, flung-to the wicket, barred it securely, turned the huge key in the lock, and then cast it over into the inner moat. This done, with his good blade in his hand, again he leaped upon his foes, and again put them to the route.

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CHAP. XIV.

CONCLUSION.

To the Courteous and Uncourteous Reader.

I AM not of the sect of those who think it necessary to drain to the dregs the interest of a story; who fatigue us with formal descriptions of the happiness of their heroes or heroines, whom for six long volumes they had been tormenting with every species of evil. Besides, the dreamy influence is departing fast with me, and I find myself, as I recover from the malady which gave birth to these pages, returning apace into the regions of common sense. While yet a little of the romantic spirit hovers near me, I will for a minute or two once more close my eyes,

and once more picture to myself the halls of Dinan.

After the taking of the castle, and the tragical end of Geffrey Dinan, and when the ancient Earl was once more restored to liberty, it was no difficult matter to arrange terms of peace between Mortimer and Fulke de Dinan, when every thing was in the power of the victor. It was a sufficient proof of the generosity of Edmund Mortimer, that the castle of the Montgomeries was restored to its old possessors. Of Edmund Mortimer, I deem it needless to say any more: he is the hero of my tale, (if it has a hero,) and is consequently entitled to every sort of felicity; and as such, I leave him to receive his future lot from the imaginations of all that may please to imagine any thing about the matter. Neither do I deem it necessary to say aught of old De Annesey, save this, that he died in his vocation, in foraging the lands of Syr Gilbert Pem-

bruge, and was buried in the church where his forefathers rested from their toils. Of Syr Fulke, I regret that the poverty of contemporary legends forbids me to say much more: only I have good reason to believe, that he blocked up the subterraneous passage so often alluded to, as no one has been able to find it in these latter days, notwithstanding that all the old men, and all the old women too, in the neighbourhood, are positive as to its existence. I have seen, however, a monumental figure of a knight in mail armour, which from certain *indicia* (known only to myself) I conclude to be that of the brave Syr Fulke. I must add, that the said figure has reposing by its side another figure, equally stiff in its exterior, of some chaste matron of the thirteenth century. From which I conclude, that the Knight of Dinan ultimately took to himself a bride, but of what name and lineage I am not able to say. As for the

traitor Bertrand, his fate is wrapped in darkness; and were I to credit the voice of "grey-haired eld," it was terrible enough. I incline however to believe, that he was left to that worst of torturers, to himself; and wore out in exile the consciousness of the evils he had done, or sought to do. For the *good Syr Hugh*, he still sleeps by the waves of Colun.

And now I flatter myself, that with all the trick of a Romancer, I have kept up my reader's curiosity to the last, and fancy I hear him ask, "And what became of Isabel? Did she really die? (for ladies in romance are supposed to be exempt from death;) or did she retire to a convent? Or—" I will put a stop to these enquiries, by confessing frankly at once my ignorance. One thing, however, I know, that she did not perish by the rash hand of her former lover; but of her after fortunes, I am as ignorant as my readers, notwithstanding my long investigations into the subject.

The woods of Comus, indeed, have ceased to present the visionary horrors they long continued to present to the benighted peasant; and the Weeping-cross has now disappeared: but he who from St. Mary's knowl traces the wide expanse of woodland beneath, and views the vast and rich plain of H——e melting into azure before him, may still, close under his feet, descry the once haunted valley.

And now, Reader, farewell. If you have patiently followed me to this place, and here begin to complain of the dulness of my story, I must needs tell you a plain truth. Originally this story was not written for *your* amusement, nor even for your perusal. It served to dissipate for its author an hour of languor, and having done so, was considered to have accomplished its end. Begun without plan, and built on slender foundations, and written in the course of a few hours, it were madness to offer my foolish story for your critical or

uncritical judgment, (I know not which of the two I should fear the most:) No; I will profess the truth to you; I thought little about you, and now I am content to be dismissed from your thoughts for ever.

THE END.

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